

## Indian Idol to kick off Nepal tour with casino concert

Indian policeman Prashant Tamang, who became Nepal's new heartthrob after winning Sony Television's reality show 'Indian Idol', kicks off his maiden Nepal trip Friday with a concert in a leading Kathmandu casino.

The 24-year-old from Darjeeling's Tungsung village, whose arrival in Kathmandu is being awaited eagerly by fans and supporters, is coming on a four-day visit that will also see him heading for Pokhara city for a live concert.

While ITC's joint venture in Nepal, Surya Nepal, is sponsoring two mass concerts to promote its newly launched brand of clothing, Springwood, Prashant will perform his first show at Casino Royale at the five-star Yak and Yeti hotel.

It will be a hectic first day for the rising star who will fly in to Kathmandu from Mumbai, attend a press conference and get ready to rock till midnight with two other popular Indian Idol contestants, Ankita Mishra and Deepali Kishore.

The two girls, who had performed in Nepal earlier this month, would also accompany Prashant Saturday when he jives at the ground of St Xavier's School in Jawalakhel.

On Sunday, Prashant heads for Pokhara for a second mass show at the Exhibition Ground in the Naya Bazar area.

While DMI, the organiser of the two mass concerts sponsored by Surya Nepal, is trying to keep details about his arrival under wraps to ward off a possible stampede, enterprising fans are nevertheless likely to swarm the airport to give him a hero's welcome.

A daily Friday said that Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) is mulling roping in Prashant as the country's brand ambassador to promote Nepal as a tourist destination.

Earlier, NTB had another Indian brand ambassador in Indian cricket icon Sunil Gavaskar.

The two concerts are expected to be sell-outs while the five-star hotel where the new Indian idol would be staying as well as the casino where he would perform his first show in Nepal are likely to witness huge crowds.

A Nepali daily however had a grievance about the opening show.

'Though Nepalis are banned from entering the casinos, they have been sold tickets priced at Nepali Rs.4,000,' the Naya Patrika daily said.

Even on Friday, Prashant continued to hit the headlines in Nepal and a weekly speculated, tongue in cheek, whether his attendance would draw more crowds than Indian yoga guru Swami Ramdev, who winds up his training camp in Kathmandu Friday.

Nepal had erupted in joy at midnight Sunday, soon after Prashant was declared the winner of the reality show at the grand finale, vanquishing his closest contender Amit Paul from India's Meghalaya

state.

Jubilant fans danced on the streets, burst crackers and took out impromptu motorbike rallies in the capital and other towns after the results were declared, rejoicing at the success of a participant of Nepali origin.

*Sudeshna Sarkar* ( © IANS / India eNews)